

NEWS RELEASE

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US Forest Service announces participation in 2013 fee-free days

WASHINGTON, Jan. 8, 2013 – The U.S. Forest Service joins other federal agencies in offering fee-free days on public lands in 2013, beginning Jan. 21 in conjunction with Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

That day marks the first of four fee-free days the Forest Service is offering the public in 2013.

“Your national forests and grasslands are a bargain any day of the year, but even more so on fee-free days,” said [U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell](#). “Whether you stay for a few hours or a few days, your public lands are some of the best travel bargains in the nation.”

Traditionally, fees are not charged on 98 percent of national forests and grasslands, and approximately two-thirds of developed recreation sites in national forests and grasslands can be used for free. This includes opportunities such as camping and picnicking.

The Forest Service operates approximately 17,000 developed recreation sites nationwide. Of those, approximately 6,000 require recreation fees, which are used to provide visitor services, repairs and replacements, and facilities maintenance.

“Fee-free days are an ideal time to recapture your youth by taking your family to the outdoors,” said Robin Morgan, deputy director of the agency’s [Recreation, Heritage and Volunteer Resources](#). “More importantly, it’s an ideal time to introduce the young people in your life to an exceptional experience they’ll remember forever.”

The participation in fee-free days supports the efforts of President Obama’s [America’s Great Outdoors initiative](#) that aims to establish a 21st Century conservation and recreation agenda. In discussions across the nation, Americans made it clear that they want reconnect or connect for the first time with the great outdoors – and they want the government’s help.

Forest Service lands, which include 155 national forests and 20 national grasslands, offer something for everyone, from the casual hiker to the thrill-seeking recreationist. There also are opportunities and programs for children, from [Discover the Forest](#) to becoming a [Junior Snow Ranger](#) and more.

The 2013 fee-free days the Forest Service will participate in are:

- [Jan. 21, Martin Luther King Jr. Day](#)
- [June 8, National Get Outdoors Day](#)
- [Sept. 28, National Public Lands Day](#)
- [Nov. 9-11, Veterans Day Weekend](#)

Concessionaires who operate campgrounds and other amenities may choose whether to participate in the fee-free days. Contact your favorite campground for more information.

The mission of the Forest Service is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. Forest Service lands contribute more than \$13 billion to the economy each year through visitor spending alone. Those same lands provide 20 percent of the nation's clean water supply, a value estimated at \$27 billion per year.

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